GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1882
ANSWERED ON:08.03.2006
DISEASES CAUSED BY ARSENIC POLLUTION
Pathak Shri Brajesh

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been a rapid increase in the diseases caused by arsenic pollution in the country particularly in the backward and rural areas of the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) the concrete measures taken by the Union Government to check the diseases caused by arsenic pollution including foreign assistance, if any, received in this regard;

(d) whether the State Governments had requested the Union Government to allocate funds for the above purpose;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) the action taken by the Government in this regard including the funds provided to the State Governments during the last three years?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE (SMT. PANABAKA LAKSHMI)

(a) to (f): Incidents of arsenic contamination of groundwater are increasingly coming to light due to increased awareness and investigation. The cause of arsenic contamination is geogenic only. Arsenic contamination has been reported from West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Assam. The year-wise details alongwith the names of affected districts are at annexure. Prologned use of arsenic contaminated water for drinking causes diseases like arsenicosis, dermatosis, keratosis, conjuctivities, bronchitis and gastroenteritis etc. Measures have been taken by the State Governments for diagnosis and treatment of patients affected by such diseases.

Drinking water supply is a State subject and the Central Government is providing technical and financial assistance under Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme. 15% of the funds allotted to State Government under the programme are specifically earmarked for tackling water quality problems. Since 1998, the State Government of West Bengal has reported sanction of 10 sub-mission projects at the cost of Rs.44795.49 lakh with Central share of Rs.33596.62 lakh.

Annexure
Details of incidents of arsenic contamination, year-wise in the country

S.No	Name of the State	Year of incident	Districts most affected	No. of Blocks affected
1.	West Bengal	1983 +	Murshidabad	19
			Nadia	17
			North 24 Parganas	19
			South 24 Parganas	9
			Malda	7
			Burdwan	5
			Howrah	2
			Hooghly	1
2.	Chhattisgarh	1998 +	Rajnandgaon	3
3.	Bihar	2002 +	Bhojpur, Buxar, Patna, Chhapra, Vaishali	NA
4.	Jharkhand	2002 +	Sahebgunje	1

5.	Assam	2004 +	Karimgunje, NA Hailakhandi, Dhemaji	
6.	Uttar Pradesh	2004 +	Ballia	3